

Preliminary Damage Assessment Report

Newtok Village – Flooding, Persistent Erosion, and Permafrost Degradation Denial

Denied on January 18, 2017

On December 24, 2016, the Newtok Village Council President Paul Charles requested a major disaster declaration due to a combination of periodic flooding, persistent erosion, and permafrost degradation beginning on January 1, 2006, and continuing. The President requested Individual Assistance; Public Assistance (Categories C-G), including direct federal assistance; and Hazard Mitigation for the Newtok Village. On December 29, 2016, a remote joint Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) was conducted, due to the weather conditions in the Village of Newtok. PDAs estimate damages immediately after an event and are considered, along with several other factors, in determining whether a disaster is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the tribe, and that Federal assistance is necessary.¹

On January 18, 2017, the Council President’s request for a major disaster declaration was denied based on the determination that a declaration under the Stafford Act is not appropriate to address this situation.²

Summary of Damage Assessment Information Used in Determining Whether to Declare a Major Disaster

The damage claimed for Individual Assistance and Public Assistance was not associated with a specific and identifiable incident or incident period. Therefore, a cost estimate of damage could not be prepared for the requested incident to determine the cause and level of damage to the impacted residences and infrastructure.

Individual Assistance

- Total Number of Residences Impacted:³ 0
 - Destroyed - 0
 - Major Damage - 0
 - Minor Damage - 0
 - Affected - 0

- Percentage of insured residences:⁴ 0.0%
- Percentage of low income households:⁵ 0.0%
- Percentage of elderly households:⁶ 0.0%
- Total Individual Assistance cost estimate: \$0.00

Public Assistance

- Primary Impact: N/A
- Total Public Assistance cost estimate: N/A
- Per capita impact:⁷ N/A
- Statewide per capita impact indicator:⁸ \$1.43

¹ The Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) process is a mechanism used to determine the impact and magnitude of damage and resulting needs of individuals, businesses, public sector, and community as a whole. Information collected is used by the State as a basis for the Governor's request for a major disaster or emergency declaration, and by the President in determining a response to the Governor's request (44 CFR § 206.33).

² When a Governor's request for major disaster assistance under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended (Stafford Act) is under review, a number of primary factors are considered to determine whether assistance is warranted. These factors are outlined in FEMA's regulations (44 CFR § 206.48). The President has ultimate discretion and decision making authority to declare major disasters and emergencies under the Stafford Act (42 U.S.C. § 5170 and § 5191).

³ Degree of damage to impacted residences:

- Destroyed – total loss of structure, structure is not economically feasible to repair, or complete failure to major structural components (e.g., collapse of basement walls/foundation, walls or roof);
- Major Damage – substantial failure to structural elements of residence (e.g., walls, floors, foundation), or damage that will take more than 30 days to repair;
- Minor Damage – home is damaged and uninhabitable, but may be made habitable in short period of time with repairs; and
- Affected – some damage to the structure and contents, but still habitable.

⁴ By law, Federal disaster assistance cannot duplicate insurance coverage. 42 U.S.C. § 5155 and 44 C.F.R. § 206.48(b)(5).

⁵ Special populations, such as low-income, the elderly, or the unemployed may indicate a greater need for assistance. 44 C.F.R. § 206.48(b)(3).

⁶ Ibid. 44 C.F.R. § 206.48(b)(3).

⁷ Based on State population in the 2010 Census.

⁸ Statewide Per Capita Impact Indicator for FY17, *Federal Register*, October 1, 2016.